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# THE VALUE OF THE APOCRYPHA

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BY

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# PREFACE

It has been my custom to imitate my predecessor, the late Baldwin Brown, by delivering every winter on successive Sunday evenings a series of "Lectures" on some religious subject that could not with advantage be brought under ordinary pulpit treatment.

From time to time I have received expression of the wish that I might give such guidance as lay within my power on the subject of the Apocrypha. Three years ago I promised the fulfilment of this suggestion, and I have now thrown into form the results of my reading in this direction. I have not the slightest claim to scholarship on this recondite subject, and frequently found myself "in wandering mazes lost" amid the jungle of Apocalyptic and Talmudic literature. But finally I ventured to

give four Lectures, the substance of which will be found in the pages following. I trust that I did not thereby misuse the sacred opportunity of Divine Service.

It is my hope that some among my readers may be as kindly in judgment as were many among my hearers. I find that a new interest has been kindled in some minds through my exposition of these ancient Scriptures, and, as it may be a help to any who wish to pursue this interesting study, I append a list of the principal works to which I have been indebted in the preparation of this little volume.

BERNARD J. SNELL.

BRIXTON INDEPENDENT CHURCH, S.W.
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# LIST OF BOOKS CONSULTED

"Encyclopædia Biblica."

Cheyne: "Jewish Religious Life after the Exile."

Stanley: "History of the Jewish Church."

Reuss: "Commentary on Bible."

Smith: "Dictionary of Bible."

"The Temple Bible."

"The Modern Reader's Bible."

M. Conway: "Solomon and Solomonic Literature."

Rothschild: "History and Literature of Israelites."

Riggs: "History of Jewish People."

A. P. Smith: "Old Testament History."

Bleek: "Introduction to Old Testament."

Churton: "Uncanonical and Apocryphal Scriptures."

Wace: "Speaker's Commentary."

Westcott: "Bible in the Church."

# TABLE OF LEADING EVENTS

B.C.

586. Beginning of Babylonian Captivity.

539. Cyrus takes Babylon.

333. Persian Empire shattered by Alexander the Great.

323–176. Reigns of the Diadochi, or Successors.

175. Antiochus Epiphanes, King of Syria.

168. Desecration of Temple.

167. Maccabæan Revolt begins.

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63. Pompey in Jerusalem.

55. Cæsar invades Britain.

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5. Birth of Jesus Christ.

4. Death of Herod.

A.D.

70. Destruction of Jerusalem.

# APOCRYPHAL SCRIPTURES.

# I.

## APOCRYPHAL SCRIPTURES.

General Ignorance of the Apocrypha—Its Cause—Importance of these Writings—Origin and History of the Title—The Strange Position of these Books—Puritan Antagonism—Inclusive Lectionaries—Contemporary References.

The general impression throughout English Christendom is that the Apocrypha constitutes a collection of writings of very small value, if not of positive harmfulness. Not a few of our fellow-countrymen, otherwise intelligent, imagine that in some mysterious way it contains deadly Papistic virus, and deserves nothing better than to be left severely alone. If, for any reason, a preacher takes as his text some passage from this source, it is difficult for him to allay the suspicions aroused among

some of his hearers. So strong was the prejudice against this collection with the sinister name, that when a verse from *Wisdom* was engraved on a memorial to the late Queen's Consort, an acrid public discussion was initiated. The announcement of a series of lectures on the Apocrypha has been known to excite on the part of good Protestants serious apprehensions that the lecturer was preparing to embark for Rome.

This strangely persistent hallucination concerning these ancient Jewish writings is at once the cause and the result of the neglect into which they have fallen. The fact is that few Englishmen are now familiar with these books. It was not always so. But now for a century all the Bibles published in our language, save only a very small fraction of them, have appeared containing only the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments. Even the publication of an erudite and lucid translation of the Apocrypha by the Revisers has scarcely served to mitigate

the oblivion into which these books have fallen. Indeed, it is with a shock of surprise that most people realise that the revision of the Apocryphal Scriptures was included in the task committed to the care of these scholars.

How few admirers of Shakespeare are able to catch the import of Shylock's cry,—

"A Daniel come to judgment! yea, a Daniel!
O wise young judge, how I do honour thee!"

Or, how few appreciate Milton's reference in *Paradise Lost* to

"Asmodeus with the fishy fume
That drove him, though enamoured, from the spouse
Of Tobit's son,"

or understand why the poet describes Raphael as the "affable archangel," or as

"The sociable spirit that deigned
To travel with Tobias, and secured
His marriage with the seven-times-married maid."

It is questionable whether a large proportion of the orators who quote "*Magna est veritas et prævalebit*" could tell the

derivation of that splendid apophthegm. It is even more doubtful whether a goodly number of the readers of the *Epistle of St. James* know his great indebtedness to the authors of *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*. And, not to multiply further instances, it is even pathetic to reflect how rare are those members of our Christian congregations who have any understanding of the gap of "the four silent centuries" which stand between the Old and the New Testaments. True, it is not strictly so lengthy a period as 400 years that actually intervenes, for if the books were arranged chronologically we should find several of them subsequent to *Malachi*—viz., *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, *Ruth* and *Esther*, *Ecclesiastes*, *Jonah*, and *Daniel*, which last constitutes the latest word of the Old Testament. Still, although the period is by modern criticism thus somewhat abridged, there remains at least an interval of 200 years, fruitful in development for Judaism and crowded with important movements.

During that period, "between the Testaments," the empire of the world was changed from the East to the West, and the whole face of Jewish society was revolutionised. How marvellously different from the Persian ascendency which pervades the latest pages of the Old Testament is the scene presented when we open the first pages of the New Testament! By some means nothing less than a universal transformation has ensued. Judea is a province of an empire of which Daniel did not so much as dream. Palestine is studded throughout with Greek cities bearing Greek names. The language of the inhabitants is no longer Hebrew, but Hellenic. Instead of the age-long tendency of the Jews to idolatry, monotheism has become the passionate faith of all Jewry. There is a universal belief among them that the Messiah will come, and the most religious part of the nation is firmly convinced of a continuance of human life beyond the grave. Jewish traders are settled in all the

important cities of the Roman world around the Mediterranean Sea, and in such numbers that there are as many Jews outside as inside the limits of the Holy Land. In every Jewish city there is a synagogue, an institution of which the Old Testament is ignorant, an institution which is the centre of the social and religious life of the people, having become more important than the temple itself. Pharisees and Sadducees, Essenes and Herodians move on the narrow stage of Judaism, and of the origin of these sects we glean no hint in the pages of the Old Testament. How did all this come to be? Is there no light to be thrown on the screen of history, by which students may be enabled to answer the questions which are naturally aroused by these changes?

The truth is that but for the Apocrypha these centuries would remain for us almost blank; but in these neglected books we have pictures of the inner life of the Jews during this transitional

period. Some of these books originated under the Persian ascendency and pourtray life in exile; some of them were produced in Palestine, and give the life and thought of the home-country; some were written in Egypt, and show the influence of Greek thought on Old Testament conclusions. We cannot afford to thrust these books negligently aside, when by their inclusion we have before our eyes a process of development, without lesion, from the fetichism of the early Hebrews to the filial and fraternal heart of the Son of God and Son of Man.

Moreover, any writings which help us to understand the social and religious conditions under which our Lord's fellow-countrymen were living at the time of His Advent deserve welcome at our hands.

Finally, when we find, as we do find in *Wisdom*, so striking an advance in thought concerning the doctrine of immortality, that what had been in Old Testament times a dim and tenuous

dream had become a fixed article of devout belief,—when we find Almighty God described as "the Lover of souls" and "the Saviour of all,"—when it is declared that "knowledge of God is perfect righteousness,"—we cannot be far astray in rendering homage to literature that so manifestly prepared the way for the teaching of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

The term *Apocrypha* means *hidden things*. Although technically this title has been applied to the disputed books of the Old Testament only since the Reformation period, yet it was actually used of these writings (and of other writings) as long ago as the times of Origen and Clement of Alexandria at the end of the second century. Almost every sect of thinkers had its own secret teaching, carefully reserved for the initiated and with an air of mystery withheld from public knowledge. Such esoteric books of unknown contents were

regarded as suspect by Christians, and were called *apocryphal—i.e,* hidden, mysterious. By an easy transition the term was applied to books that were obscure or doubtful in their origin. "They are called hidden," said St. Augustine, "because their origin was not clear to the Fathers." Probably this opinion helped to suggest the transference of the word from the sense of *hidden* to the sense of *spurious;* and the term, which at first had simply meant *withdrawn from publicity,* was by degrees degraded to the significance which has ever since clung to it. And such is its unhappy significance in our vernacular that to say of anything that it is "apocryphal" is to indicate disbelief in it.

On the principle, therefore, of "give a dog a bad name and you may as well hang him," it has come to pass that these fourteen uncanonical books, which were originally called Apocryphal merely in the sense that their origin was doubtful, have been by some deemed

unworthy of study. The popular mind has been unduly prejudiced by a depreciatory meaning, which in the flux of time had attached itself to the word employed to indicate this collection.

It is more difficult to explain how the books came to occupy their strange position between the Old and the New Testaments. The Hebrew Canon was formed gradually. It is impossible to say at what exact epoch the Canon may be said to have been closed, but it will be sufficiently exact to suggest the year 100 B.C. It is equally impossible to determine the principles of selection which were adopted by those who were responsible for the choice. We are aware that our Old Testament is a volume of survivals from a vast national literature, but the precise reasons which determined the Jewish doctors in deciding which books were "fittest to survive" we can only vaguely guess. We know that as a general rule they excluded secular works; but *Esther* is included and many

religious writings are excluded. The text of the Old Testament refers to no less than fourteen such works—*e.g.*, the *Book of the Wars of the Lord*, the *Books of Nathan*, *Iddo* and *Ahijah*. But of these and of others no trace survives; possibly they were lost in the confused troubles of the Exile. We are safe, however, in saying that they excluded all works that came into being subsequent to the period of prophetic activity, that is, subsequent to the building of the Second Temple, after which original genius became rare and feeble. So that these, our Apocryphal books, were excluded from the Hebrew Canon by the recency of their origin, if for no other reason.

Now, there were many Jews beyond the limits of Palestine, and these were being influenced by Greek methods of thought and were acquiring Greek as the speech of every-day life. We are familiar with the oft-recurring antithesis of the New Testament, "the Jew

and the Greek." The whole world outside Jewry seemed to them to be Greek, and all who were not Jews were described as Greeks. Such Jews as left the home-land were technically known as "the Dispersion" (Jno. 7, 35; Jas. 1, 1).

It became quite natural, therefore, for expatriated Jews to think of translating the ancient Scriptures of their race into the tongue which they familiarly employed, that is, from Hebrew into Greek. Such a translation was undertaken at Alexandria, a great centre of Eastern commerce and of Greek culture, controlling the corn-supply of the Roman world, and containing (according to Philo) no less than a million Jews. This translation we have in the Septuagint version of the Old Testament. It is important to remember that between the Hebrew Old Testament and the Greek New Testament there was this connecting link of a Greek Old Testament, for our English Bible contains traces of it—*e.g.*, the various books

are called by their Greek titles, *Genesis*, *Exodus*, etc.

This translation included not only all the Canonical books, but more also, for these Græcised Jews had less punctilious views of inspiration than had their Palestinian compatriots. They valued all writings soever on sacred subjects, and admitted to their Canon books of later origin than those which were alone received into the aforesaid Palestinian Canon. They went so far as to include some works which had never appeared in the holy Hebrew mother-tongue but were produced in Greek! Of these fourteen Apocryphal books the only ones which had been written in Hebrew were 1 *Esdras*, *Ecclesiasticus*, 1 *Maccabees*, *Baruch* and *Judith*.

Our very familiarity with the Canon of Scripture blinds us to the prodigious difficulties with which the exact limits of Canonical Scriptures were determined. There is a wide distinction, popularly understood, between the animal kingdom

and the vegetable kingdom taken collectively. But it is very difficult, if not impracticable, to draw a definite line of demarcation between the lower limits of the animal kingdom and the higher limits of the vegetable kingdom. So it was difficult to discriminate nicely in the matter of the distinction of Canonical and Apocryphal Scriptures, and for many centuries there was no settled and indisputable line of demarcation.

And it must be carefully noted that the Bible of the early Christian Church included the larger Alexandrian list of Old Testament books. The Church inherited both recensions of the Old Testament; but the Palestinian was in Hebrew and the Alexandrian was in Greek, and as Greek came to be more commonly spoken the latter came into general use. It is from this version, the Septuagint, that the writers of our New Testament continually quote. Dr. Salmon gives a striking instance. In *Hebrews* 10, 5 the words "a body hast thou prepared me"

are quoted from *Psalm* 40, 6; but in our translation of the latter the passage occurs as "mine ears hast thou opened (pierced)." The latter is the correct rendering of the Hebrew, but the former represents the Septuagint translation therefrom.

It was through this Greek version that the Old Testament became known to the world at large. Instead of the result of the gradual disappearance of barriers between Jews and Gentiles being, as the Jews had feared, that Judaism would be swamped by heathenism, the actual result was that this Greek Bible, prepared for the convenience of Jews in Greek-speaking countries, spread reverence for the Law of Moses in every part of the civilised world. When the first Christian missionaries went into foreign lands, they found in every city a Jewish colony which had already taught many of the thoughtful Gentiles the folly of polytheism and the purity of the Hebrew faith.

In the Septuagint the Apocryphal books were arranged alongside the Canonical books, and they were used and cited just as the other books were used and cited. Yet, for the sake of critical accuracy, let it be remarked that there is not a solitary instance in which any New Testament writer can be unequivocally said to have quoted from an "Apocryphal" book; though the list appended at the end of the volume shows remarkable parallelisms. Many of the Greek fathers, such as Origen, Cyprian, and Clement of Alexandria, refer to the Apocryphal books as "Divine Scriptures" precisely in the same way in which they refer to the Canonical books. Though, be it also added, they seem to have been cognisant of the distinction between those books which the Hebrews recognised as belonging to their stricter Canon and those books which owed their circulation to the Greek version only.

This condition of things obtained right

down to the Reformation, and the omission of the Apocrypha from our Bible is one of the strangest results accruing from the Reformation. The Roman Church, then as now, treated the Apocrypha as on the level of the Old Testament. Luther, although his Bible of 1534 included the Apocrypha, was led to disparage it through the fact of his opponents adducing it as an authority for the doctrine of purgatory and for the efficacy of prayers and masses for the dead. On the other hand, the majority at the Council of Trent in 1547 took more interest in the polemical discussions of their own day than in learned research, and may be supposed to have been moved to assign high authority to the Apocrypha because of the controversial use of a few texts favouring the intercession of angels (*Tobit* 12, 12—15), the intercession of departed saints (2 *Macc.* 15, 12—14; *Baruch* 4, 4), prayers for the dead (2 *Macc.* 12, 44—45), and the merit of almsgiving (*Tobit*

3, 10; 4, 7 : *Ecclus.* 3, 30). This Council of Roman Catholics anathematised any who refused to receive as sacred and canonical these Apocryphal books, as they had been wont to be read in the Catholic Church and are contained in the old Latin Vulgate version. The Council called itself Œcumenical, but no country was adequately represented thereat except Italy. The scholarship of its members was ludicrously inefficient; "none knew Hebrew, only a few knew Greek—there were even some whose knowledge of Latin was held but in low repute . . . not one had eminence as a learned divine" (cf. *Speaker's Commentary*, xxxiv.). It amazed people then, and it amazes people now, that so small a Council, representing so small a section of Christendom, should undertake to decide so grave a question and to settle finally for the Catholic Church by an infallible decree a question which for fifteen centuries had perplexed Christendom.

It is not at all strange, therefore, that

the Reformed Churches adopted as their own the Palestinian Canon of the Old Testament, discarding the wider Alexandrian Canon. And from that time in English and German Bibles the Apocryphal books have been distinctly separated from the other books, which together with them had formed the Old Testament according to the larger Canon. Moreover, there was much controversy as to the continuance even of this practice, many favouring the entire elision of these doubtful books. In a sermon before the House of Commons in 1643 the preacher complained of the custom of putting the Apocrypha between the Old and the New Testaments:—"Thus sweetly and nearly should the two Testaments join together, and thus divinely would they kiss each other, but that the wretched Apocrypha doth thrust in between."

The Church of England, true to its character of moderation, shrank from severing the Apocryphal books from the

Bible, and continued the old practice of drawing its lessons alike from the Canonical and the Apocryphal portions of the Old Testament. By the Prayer Book of 1549, *Tobit*, *Judith*, *Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus* and *Baruch* were ordered to be read in public. According to the Articles, these Apocryphal books "the Church doth read for example of life and instruction of manners, but yet doth it not apply them to teach any doctrine."

The Westminster Confession roundly declares that the Apocryphal books "are of no authority in the church of God, nor to be otherwise approved or made use of than other human writings." The Puritans, with their severe theories of inspiration, feared lest, by the reading in public worship of Canonical and Apocryphal books indiscriminately, the people might be led to confuse the two; and none will gainsay the validity of such an apprehension on their part. An Anglican pamphlet of 1689 argues, "Is it for greater edification to astonish our

people with reading all the hard names in the *Chronicles*, *Ezra* and *Nehemiah*, instead of the Books of *Wisdom* and *Ecclesiasticus*? If the *Canticles* are omitted, because interpreters of that mysterious song are not so easily to be found as readers, we have the practice of the synagogue and the ancient Church to justify us."

Suffice it to say, the Puritans were quite unnecessarily vehement in their disparagement of the Apocrypha and in their opposition to its inclusion in Scripture. They were in the midst of a violent reaction against everything that directly or indirectly savoured of "the scarlet woman," and they went to extremes which no calm and dispassionate critic would now attempt to justify. When Christian men thrust even the Lord's Prayer into the background and regarded its public use with suspicion, it is not surprising that they protested against the public use of the Apocrypha, as a "menace to the

Protestant conceptions of the Bible." Rome exalted the Apocrypha to the level of the Canon, therefore all good Protestants were called upon to disdain and detest it! Happily we have reached an age in which it is possible, without fear of ostracism, to suppose that books that are signalised by such sublime thoughts and made glorious by such stirring stories of splendid heroism and saintliness, are fitly ascribed to Him from Whom cometh every good gift. It is impossible not to regret the peremptory tones with which these books have been dismissed by many Protestants. Surely it is not unreasonable to claim that critics who express their opinions so summarily should be conversant with the laws of literary criticism and the methods of historical enquiry, to say nothing of the intrinsic importance of the contents of the books and their place in the development of religious thought. Books that have meant so much in the history of Christendom deserve more

than a casual derogatory dismissal at the hands of men who desire to be regarded as fair-minded in judgment and catholic in sympathy.

The Apocryphal books were an integral part of the Authorised Version of the Bible in 1611, and were included in the Revised Version of 1895. And though the Bible Society prints its Bibles consisting only of the Old and New Testaments, the reasons which originally induced them to decide on that course have long since become obsolete. Bishop Wordsworth pleaded strongly for the retention of the Apocrypha on grounds that have not become less important since: "If you carry a Bible without the Apocryphal books into Greece, Asia and Palestine—that is, into those very countries whence the Gospel derived its origin and language—you would be told that you have not the Bible, but only a mutilated copy of it. The Greek Church would renounce you as guilty of sectarian error,

if you presented her with a Bible not containing the Apocryphal books. If you pass over to Italy and France, or to Spain and Portugal, and endeavour to circulate such Bibles among persons who, as we all assert, are in great need of the Scriptures, they will immediately say to you, 'This may be an English Bible, but it is not the Bible of Christendom. It excludes books which the Eastern and Western Churches have never ceased to read from the earliest times to this hour.'" It is a fact that the Bible of the historic churches does include these books. Doubtless there is something anomalous in the hybrid character of the volume; but this anomaly, like most anomalies, is the result of a long historical development.

There is great inequality of merit and of importance in these fourteen books. There is a great gulf between *Wisdom* on the one hand, with its union of Greek philosophy and Hebrew religion, and the purely Jewish thoughts of *Ecclesiasticus*

on the other, between the vivid historicity of 1 *Maccabees* and the edifying romanticism of *Tobit*. But there is as great difference among the Canonical books. And I am incapable of recognising an intelligible principle of literary or religious criticism in the determination to reverence *Solomon's Song* and *Esther*, and to disregard *Wisdom*, *Ecclesiasticus*, and 1 *Maccabees*. It is most true that they date from the decadent period of Israel's national life, and that in freshness and vigour they are far surpassed by the greatest books of the Old Testament, while their spiritual force is incomparably less to us who have nourished our souls on psalms and prophets until their sanctity is enriched and deepened by the religious experiences of a life-time. But I do not hesitate to claim that *Ecclesiastes* is not the equal of *Wisdom*, and to assert that amid the heroic chapters of the world's history there are few that can compare for pure patriotism and religious fervour

with the story of the Maccabæan struggle as set forth in these neglected books.

George Eliot tells us that Adam Bede was very fond of "the keen-edged words" of *Ecclesiasticus*, and that he had an added joy in feeling that it might be permitted him to differ, if occasion of difference arose, from one who was but an Apocryphal writer. There is in this incident a hint of a very useful function to be fulfilled by the Apocrypha.

John Bunyan, in his spiritual autobiography, "Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners" (§ 62), relates that he was for a long time at once comforted and perplexed by finding great relief from words, for which he vainly sought in the Bible—"Look at the generations of old and see: did ever any trust in the Lord and was confounded?" For more than a year he was unable to find the place of this text, "but at last casting my eyes upon the Apocryphal books I found it in the tenth verse of the second chapter of *Ecclesiasticus*. This at the

first did somewhat daunt me, because it was not in those texts which we call holy or canonical. Yet as this sentence was the sum and substance of many of the promises, it was my duty to take the comfort of it, and I bless God for the word, for it was good to me. That word doth still oft-times shine before my face."

Finally, and with characteristic discrimination, does Dean Stanley write of these books, "which though denied a place in the Canonical Scriptures, yet shade away from the outskirts of those Scriptures into the Grecian philosophy and poetry, and have been acknowledged by grave theologians and by Protestant churches to be inspired by the same Divine Spirit that breathed, though in fuller tones, through Isaiah or through David." It was in the first age of our religion that it was written, "Every Scripture inspired of God is also profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for instruction which is in righteousness."

# THE STORY OF THE MACCABEES.

## II.

## THE STORY OF THE MACCABEES.

Sketch of Historic Situation — Persecuting Paganisers — Antiochus Epiphanes — The Revolt — Judas — Rise of Jewish Sects.

ALEXANDER THE GREAT defeated the Persians at the Battle of Issus 333 B.C., and in order to break also the Persian naval power he proceeded forthwith to take possession of the Syrian coast. Palestine thus fell into his power. Josephus preserves the legend that in his progress to Egypt the Macedonian conqueror visited Jerusalem and did obeisance to the high priest; but it is extremely doubtful whether the Jewish capital would possess sufficient importance in Alexander's eyes to suggest his actual presence there. *Daniel* (7, 7) pictured the Greek power as a most ferocious beast, "dreadful and terrible and

strong exceedingly; it had great iron teeth; it devoured, and broke in pieces, and stamped the residue with its feet,"—a striking testimony to the rapidity and thoroughness of the conquests of this awe-inspiring stranger.

Alexander died before consolidating his newly-acquired empire, and an epoch of dire confusion followed. We need not attempt to follow the complicated struggle of his successors, who divided among them the vast territories whose sole unity lay in the fact that they had all alike been overrun by the world-conqueror. Suffice it to say that Palestine was long the bone of contention between the Ptolemies, who ruled Egypt and the Seleucids, to whose lot fell Syria: after alternating fortunes it was annexed to the latter.

Under Greek rule the social and political fabric of the country was reconstructed. The essential diversity between Hebrew and Hellenic polity lay in this—that all Semitic society was based on

the tribe (consequently we find that all political movements recorded in the Old Testament sprang from tribal action), while Greek polity was based upon the city as the unit, so that each city was autonomous with jurisdiction over the surrounding district. From this time forth Jerusalem, as the chief city, had a new importance.

The headship of the Jewish community there was already vested in the high priest, in whom State and Church were one; and under the Greek *régime* he continued in this dual capacity, but democratic organisation associated with him a committee of influential citizens. This was the origin of the Jewish Sanhedrim.

But, what is of more interest to ourselves, along with Greek methods of government came Greek religion. No city was founded by the Greeks, or reorganised by them, without receiving a patron deity from the well-supplied Greek Pantheon. To the majority of

Orientals there was nothing objectionable in this procedure, for (as Dean Stanley dryly remarks) "in polytheistic religions a few gods more or less do not make much difference." But to the Jews nothing could be more obnoxious, and the more their new rulers insisted the more stoutly the Jews affirmed their hereditary faith. This new intensity of religious patriotism is reflected in one of the literary productions of this period, our book of *Chronicles*, which is one long argument, cast into the historic form, for the Divine authority of the Temple and its officials. Separation from all that was heathenish was the vital nerve of Jewish piety, and at every new advance of Hellenism the Jews shut themselves more closely within their exclusive system. While on the other side nothing could have been more repulsive to Greek feeling than the intense acrid Jewish puritanism with which now for the first time they were brought in contact.

This was the condition of affairs under

which we open the Apocryphal books of the Maccabees. The first of these books is the work of a true historian, who, with fine simplicity, narrates events which themselves have the epic quality. It is the struggle for supremacy between Hellenism and Judaism, and the story is "inspiring enough to be inspired" (Coleridge).

It is 175 B.C.; the Jews are tributary to the Syrian King Antiochus Epiphanes, who is bent on breaking the obstinate neck of Jewish nationalism. He is the "king of fierce countenance and understanding dark sentences, whose power is mighty but not by his own power, who destroys the holy people" (*Dan.* 8, 23, 24). He seized Jerusalem and transformed it into a Greek garrison; he dedicated the temple to Olympian Zeus, in whose honour he had already built at Athens a splendid temple, still attested by its impressive ruins; he slaughtered swine in the sacred precincts, and sprinkled the blood and broth of the sacrifices over

everything counted holy. It is not strange that, amid these fearful calamities, when imagination was at full tension and hearts were cloven with anxiety, portents are reported: "Through all the city, for the space almost of forty days, there were seen horsemen galloping through the air, and squadrons of cavalry in array" (2 *Macc.* 5, 5—10). There are two Psalms (74 and 79) which reflect the horror of the situation, the ruin of Jerusalem, the desecration of the temple, the setting up of Pagan emblems, the slaughter of the faithful. This is "the abomination of desolation" of *Daniel* (12, 11), and Antiochus is "the blaspheming horn" (7, 8). It was in these dark days that *Daniel* was written; with its sword-like utterances, its piercing exhortations to endure, and its promise of Divine help, it sprang from the deep necessities of the time. Its stories brought new hope and courage to suffering patriots, and gave a holy canonisation to the newly-martyred dead.

A fearful persecution was now decreed by Antiochus. All sacred books were destroyed: merely to possess a copy was declared a capital offence. Sabbath-keeping, circumcision and all Mosaic ordinances were forbidden on pain of death. Instead of the Feast of Tabernacles he instituted Bacchanalian processions, and grave Israelites were compelled to join the processions wearing ivy-wreaths around their heads, while the mark of the ivy-leaf was branded into their skin and swine's flesh was forced into their reluctant mouths. Commissioners were instructed to destroy Judaism root and branch, and to insist that all the inhabitants of Palestine duly conformed to Pagan rites. Jewish tradition tells proudly of men who died bravely for their ancestral faith—of a scribe ninety years old who "stript of clothes but wrapt in the dignity of old age and piety" was slain; of seven brothers who bore fearful torments of the rack, the wheel, scourge and flame (all the

enginery of diabolical religious hate) rather than break the Law, while their mother encouraged them to endure, "and so they died." They were the vanguard of "the noble army of martyrs."

Remembering that the religion for which these heroic souls counted their lives but dross was the Levitical religion which our Lord discarded, it may be that some are inclined to say that their fidelity was worthy of a better cause. But what makes a man a saint or a hero is not the intrinsic worth of the cause for which he puts his life in jeopardy, it is the fidelity to conviction which is the all in all. That ceremonial formalism was founded on invincible faith in the God of Righteousness.

Antiochus had overreached himself; he had pushed matters to that extreme at which the most drastic coercion breaks down. At a village not now to be identified, an aged priest, Matathias, proudly refused to sacrifice to the Greek

gods, slew a renegade Jew, struck down the royal commissioner, and with his five sons fled to the mountains. This was the fruitful beginning of revolt. Events had come to so horrible a pass, that there was no way but to take the sword and to look to God for success. This handful of brave men drew others around them, and the insurgents went through the country destroying heathen altars, slaying apostates, reviving Jewish rites and reopening synagogues. A guerilla warfare began, and the Greek soldiers could not exterminate their foes in their rocky strongholds.

Matathias, unable to bear the weight of age and anxiety, died, charging his sons to lay down their lives for the Law and Covenant of their fathers. His son Judas Maccabæus succeeded to the leadership, one of the bravest men who ever lived; and "the lion of Judah" once more lifted up its head. *Maccabæus* means the hammer of his foes. He was the Jewish ideal of "the happy

warrior," uniting military skill with absolute confidence in God. The name "Maccabæus" was applied to all his kinsmen, and sometimes is used to include all who resisted the Syrian tyranny.

Round Judas rallied 6,000 men, who preferred death to unfaithfulness. He scattered the first Syrian army that was sent against him; a second army was despatched to overawe him, but at Beth-horon he again won a victory and "from mighty kings he took the spoil." Once a thousand Jews were surprised on the Sabbath, and the enemy meeting no resistance, slew all without mercy; thenceforward Judas determined that on occasion they must fight on Sabbath days.

Exasperated at the failure of two armies Antiochus sent a third army of 60,000 to hunt down this intrepid band of hillsmen. Terror spread among the Jews, and many fell away. Judas called all the faithful to Mizpeh, and made the

old proclamation that none should go forth to battle who were timid and faint-hearted. In a situation such as then presented itself, the only hope of victory lay in stratagem, and stratagem calls primarily for quality, not quantity, of men. Judas winnowed his levies as did Gideon, and for the same reason. To the gallant remainder, 3,000 strong, he addressed a stirring appeal, gave them as watchword "Help of God!" and set up his camp "disdainful of danger." Tidings came that the enemy intended to fall on the little force by night, whereon Judas formed the daring resolution to elude attack by himself surprising the enemy. Nothing could withstand the ardour of the Jewish attack, the Syrians fled in panic through the night, while the victors sang *Psalm* 136, the national anthem of their race, enumerating the never-ending mercies of their God.

The way now lay open for Judas to Jerusalem. He could not capture its

strong citadel, but entering the temple-area he found all in ruins and painful desolation. Then those warriors who had destroyed three armies, fell on their faces, threw dust on their heads, and wept aloud. They restored all that could be restored, and dedicated the temple afresh. "In like manner Judas gathered together for us all those writings that had been scattered by reason of the war that befell; and they are still with us" (2 *Macc.* 2, 14).

After Antiochus's death his successor brought a still more imposing army into Judea, Judas suffered his first reverse, and all seemed lost. But at the last extremity help came; for a revolt broke out in Antioch, and the Syrian army was withdrawn. Religious freedom was granted to the Jews, who had so valiantly vindicated the rights of conscience. And no further attempt was made to Græcize them by force. From that date until the fatal year 70 A.D. the

temple-worship was continued without intermission.

Ill-content with religious freedom, the Jews still struggled for civil independence, but that was impossible of achievment. With a following of eight hundred men Judas was overwhelmed by weight of numbers. "If our time has come," said he, "let us die manfully; let us not stain our honour." Sore was the battle, sore as that waged by another eight hundred at "Thermopylæ's tryst," and the result was the same: the eight hundred were not driven from the field, but lay dead upon it.

Judas was canonised by the popular voice. He had lifted Judea out of the dust; displaying a patriotism, generalship and heroism of which his race will evermore be proud, he rendered a yet more signal service, for he inspired them with a new sense of their religion.

His death left them in a forlorn condition. Jonathan succeeded his brother Judas, and was appointed high priest by

the Syrian monarch, wearing at once diadem and mitre as priest-king. His brother Simon succeeded Jonathan in the dual office, though the family of Matathias had, of course, no hereditary claim such as the Levitical code ordained, and though the precisionists were beginning to protest against the continued irregularity. "The land had rest all the days of Simon, . . . they tilled their land in peace, . . . they sat each man under his vine and his fig-tree; and there was none to make them afraid. The law he searched out, . . . he glorified the sanctuary" (1 *Macc.* 14, 4—15). He was treacherously slain by his son-in-law; and so ended the last of the sons of Matathias, who had all died for faith and country. His son, John Hyrcanus, succeeded him, and the rule of the Maccabees tended to become a despotism of the common Oriental sort, sustained by mercenaries and relentless against opponents. When the Maccabees became kings instead of religious leaders,

their influence was on the wane: it was the religious background of their movement that made them national heroes.

This is the story told by 1 *Maccabees*, a record of priceless worth, written soon after the events therein detailed and drawn largely from the author's personal knowledge and recollection. Present-day scholars are unanimous in appraising it as an essentially trustworthy document in which facts are allowed to speak for themselves. It is by far the most important of the five books of the Maccabees,* and was written in Hebrew by a Sadducee, who is unknown to fame.

2 *Maccabees* covers the same ground as its predecessor, and is supplementary thereto. But it was written later, in Greek, by an author of Pharisaic proclivities, who had a predilection for the marvellous. There are accounts of

* The third, fourth and fifth books are neither important nor interesting, and only fragments of them are extant.

astounding miracles concerning which the former book is silent. Where the earlier narrator tells the story with restraint and no hint of superhuman interposition, the later narrator indulges in a plethora of marvels: Judas is surrounded by angelic champions; sometimes his little band is led by a mystic horseman in white, and in the thick of the fray five splendid horsemen appear suddenly, as if from heaven, as guardian-angels of the five gallant brothers. It is significant that as we are able to get to closer quarters with the events recorded the tissue of miracles vanishes. 2 *Maccabees* did not please Luther, who, while praising its predecessor, wished that the later book had never been written: "it judaizes too much and contains much heathen naughtiness." It may be that it was intended by its Pharisaic author as a polemic against the Maccabæan princes; certainly, it was composed as a work of edification according to the taste of the times.

One incident of the Maccabæan struggle demands an instant's attention. For the first time we find Scriptural mention of Rome. Judas made a compact with this portentous Western power which two centuries later was to make an end of the Jewish State. Nothing of any moment resulted from the treaty, but that embassy of Judas's two representatives to the Roman Senate strikes the imagination. Little did the Romans think that in five centuries their mighty Commonwealth would emblazen on its banners the Cross on which had hung a Carpenter belonging to that little nation which now came begging their alliance.

In the course of these struggles against Syrian tyranny the Jews became unanimously devoted to the worship of Jehovah. There had at first been no few Hellenisers, who were content to make terms with conquering paganism; now the pressure of common peril had converted the nation to a new

intensity of piety. But they were divided into sects, whose names are familiar to readers of the New Testament. Some emphasised the Law as containing the whole duty of man, and maintained the extreme principle that every jot and tittle of the Law must be kept even though by such keeping Israel should be brought to ruin. They withdrew from the struggle for Jewish independence and gave themselves wholly to the study of the Law, for which reason they were known as Separatists or *Pharisees*. Others identified themselves with the fortunes of the Maccabæan House, and were called *Sadducees* (after Zadok). These were conservative and aristocratic in tendency, and not by any means the free-thinkers that they are occasionally deemed by reason of their denial of the resurrection. It was not as free-thinkers, but as conservatives that they denied the resurrection; since the Scriptures did not teach a resurrection, they would not accept it.

In B.C. 63 Pompey was in Syria, regulating affairs on behalf of Rome. He took Jerusalem, and the last hope of national independence went by for ever. For the next 130 years Judea was tributary to Rome, and despite the large liberties granted to them, the Jews proved fractious vassals who wrought their own destruction. Herod the Idumean came to the front, energetic, unscrupulous, well equipped in the art of getting on the winning side. He induced Antony to make him king of Judea, as agent of the Roman power, and with his establishment on the throne of Jerusalem our story ends. He rebuilt the temple on such a scale that it became a proverb, "who hath not seen Herod's Temple has seen nothing beautiful."

The Jews were no longer a nation, but an agglomeration of sects separated by mutual distrust and hatred, but all hating Gentiles with equal ardour. Then, "when Herod was king," at the "term appointed by the Father," Jesus was born.

# APOCRYPHAL LEGENDS AND PROPHECIES.

# III.

## APOCRYPHAL LEGENDS AND PROPHECIES.

Literary Activity—Esdras—Song of the Three Children—History of Susannah—Esther—Baruch—Judith—Tobit.

GRADUALLY thoughtful Jews had been forced to the conclusion that the purpose of God in their national history was to secure to all nations a knowledge of the true God. That had been the faith of their great prophets (cf. *Isai.* 55, 5); and that conception influenced the commonalty far more than our experience would lead us to suppose, for post-exilic Judah was much more a religious community than a political State. Josephus tells us that the Jew knew the Law better than he knew his own name. In their synagogues throughout Jewry they came

together to confer, to argue, and to teach their faith to their children, that all might know that wisdom which begins in the fear of God. They searched out old writings, they cherished and studied them, they edited with many comments the words of prophets, narrators, and poets. They wrote new settings of their wondrous past, which ever became more wondrous and glorious. They composed new enlargements of their Divine doctrine, new books of Psalms, richer volumes of Wisdom, and cunning expositions. They dreamed new Apocalypses concerning the way in which God would bring right to pass in the days to come.

These were the men to whom Jesus said, "Come unto me, and I will give you rest." Young Judaism was alert, diligent, full of religious musings. It is only with an effort that we realise the keen, vivid religiosity of the Jews who live in our Western cities, and there is no reason to suppose that their race has become more intensely interested in the

niceties of religious discussion in modern than in ancient times. Imagine what Paul was before his conversion to Christ, and one has a fair idea of the intellectual workings of the more serious-minded Jews in the age before Christ. All else had failed them but religion, and into that channel they turned the full current of their energies. So diligently did they study and so subtly annotate the writings of the past that those writings became a record far more of themselves and of their ways of thinking and their customs of worship than of the past which they purported to chronicle.

Both the books known as *Esdras* (the Greek form of Ezra), written probably before or about the very days of Christ, give us an idea of the hopes and theories in ebullition in Judea. 1 *Esdras* is a re-setting of the story of the Jews' return from captivity, which we have already in *Chronicles*, *Nehemiah*, and *Ezra* (4). It is a free compilation with arbitrary transpositions, which seriously misled Josephus

and threw into confusion this section of his Jewish History. It is simply the literary effort of a Greek Jew with a missionary spirit, who was bent on keeping his compatriots, widely scattered throughout the Roman world, acquainted in some fashion with the sacred story of their past, and who therefore rewrote *Ezra* in Greek, the vernacular of those parts. The most interesting episode is that recounted in 3, 4—5, 6, the contest of wit before Darius. The King has made a great feast. After the guests' departure three young men, guards of the royal chamber, agree to compose each one a "sentence" on a given thesis, and to deposit it sealed under the king's pillow, to be read when he rises in the morning. The proposition maintained by the first is that wine is the strongest of all things, by the second that the king is strongest, and by the third that women are strongest, but truth above all. In the morning the king summons an assembly of his courtiers, and the three recite their

"sentences." The arguments for each are given in detail. The conclusion of the third, "this was Zerubbabel," was hailed with applause. By his success in this argument Zerubbabel obtained the royal assent to the Jews' return to Palestine. And here occurs that magnificent sentence, "Truth abideth and is strong for ever; she liveth and conquereth for evermore. . . . Blessed be the God of truth." And all the people shouted and said, "Great is truth and strong above all things." This episode is probably the original part of the work, round which the rest has been grouped.

2 *Esdras* is more important than its predecessor and very dissimilar. It is only in the Revised Version that the complete book is put into the hands of English readers, for by a discovery made in 1875 by Professor Bensly a new chapter was discovered at Amiens. This book is the finest and most sympathetic of the class of writings known as Apocalyptic; it was widely adopted by

Christians and interpolated by a Christian hand. Filled with bitter disappointment at Judea's hard fate, the author was even more possessed by his hopes of the coming Rule of God under the sceptre of a Son of Man : this is the central tenet of the author's faith. These apocalypses of the age to come were conceived out of the lamentations over the irredeemable past and the hunger for deliverance. It is not easy to explain by what process of reasoning they ascribed their ideas to Ezra, Enoch, Daniel, and other great men of the past, but in some way they convinced themselves that these old heroes had experienced such visions. When *Esdras* was put at the head of the composition, it was set there in the conviction that such was the will of the Great Spirit to whom they ascribed all their own dreams and imaginings, just as they ascribed to him the events transpiring around them. The author believed that this is what Ezra would have said, or what Ezra must have seen in the

visions of his soul. And, strange as it may appear to our code of literary ethics, such procedure is adjudged by all our leading scholars as having been quite guileless on the author's part.

Of the six dreams that constitute the book, the former three are studied dialogues, the latter three are extravagances to which it is hard for us to attach importance or meaning.

1. "Why has God made this sinful and sorrowful world?" The angel of light answers that many problems are beyond man's power of solution. Why then was understanding given to man, if he is not to solve difficult questions? And the angel answers that the next age will bring the solution, and gives signs of the approaching end very similar to the signs detailed in *Matthew* 24.

2. "Why has God chosen Israel and endowed them with His truth, only to allow them to be trodden under foot of all men?" The angel replies that God loves His people more than Esdras does

or can ; "canst thou understand all that God understands?" He Himself will judge and rectify the world.

3. "Why do not God's chosen ones possess the world?" The angel declares that the present strait and difficult road leads assuredly to a better future, which will be brought in by God's anointed Son. The compassionate character of God is sufficient assurance that this must be so.

There is close parallelism between *Esdras* and the teachings of early Christians, so much so that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that Chapters 1, 2, and 15, 16 are by the hand of a Christian. Most authorities are agreed on this, and further that the author of the main portion of the work wrote during the reign of the Emperor Domitian, while the Christian additions were made two centuries later.

The last vision is the legend of the restoration of the Sacred Scriptures. By the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D.

all had been burnt, and the last oracles were to be restored by Esdras, who in forty days dictates to five swiftly writing scribes the contents of all the books destroyed. It seems an incredible story, but there is this kernel of truth in it, that Ezra was the veritable editor of the whole Levitical legislation.

This strange book gave to angelology the Archangel Uriel to complete the glorious quaternion—Michael, Gabriel, Raphael and Uriel—who stand at the four corners of the throne of God. It also set on foot the legend of the lost ten tribes of Israel, mysteriously hidden in the depths of the East in "the other land," "the country where never mankind dwelt," awaiting the day in which Messiah shall lead them back to their own land.

Three short additions to *Daniel* call for brief mention:

1. *The Song of the Three Children* was supposed to be sung by them in the furnace of fire into which they were

flung for their refusal to worship the idol. This Hymn of Adoration, known as the "Benedicite," holds an honoured place in all the liturgies of Christendom. Legendary as it is, it implicitly contains a splendid protest against idolatry, an invocation of all that is great and strong, beautiful and holy to join in the perpetual benediction of the Source of all. Charles Kingsley regarded it as the very crown and flower of the Old Testament. The very monotony of form, with its accumulated doxologies, is itself effective. "It is like the monotony of the winds or the waves, and powerfully suggests to the imagination the amplitude and splendour of God's world by the sublimity of the universal chorus of praise."

2. *Bel and the Dragon:* a grotesque fiction exposing the impostures of idolatry. In the second part of *Robinson Crusoe* Defoe made use of it, substituting a wooden idol for the live monster of the Apocryphal book.

3. *The History of Susannah:* which more than any other writing has roused serious questionings concerning the Apocrypha as a whole. It is roundly condemned as "the invention of a prurient mind." I cannot so deliver it to the crows. It is the story of a Jewish wife who, firm in her faith of an Almighty Judge, stood unmoved in her dreadful choice between death and dishonour. "I am straitened on every side, . . . it is better to fall into your hands than to sin in the sight of the Lord. O everlasting God, who knowest all secrets, behold, I must die." *That* is a deeper note than any that a prurient mind could invent; and in the catacombs stands Susannah, the innocent lamb of the Church, between the wolves ready to devour her. The deprecatory criticism is inadequate. The conclusion of scholars is that this Apocryphon is an example of a Jewish *tendenz-schrift*, calculated to show the utility of careful cross-examination of testimony and the

necessity of a rigorous punishment of false witnesses.

*The Rest of Esther* consists of additions made to the book, because of its grave defect in containing no mention of God. Some pious Jew therefore added a section, in which Haman is blackened with a more malignant energy and the Divine Name is plentifully introduced. This little section serves at least to illustrate the freedom with which editors of the second century B.C. handled Old Testament materials. Jerome called these additions "schoolboys' themes."

"*Baruch the Scribe*" was secretary to Jeremiah, and is so described in canonical prophecy. It is known that he shared his master's exile in Egypt, where in all probability he transcribed the prophecies of his patron and reduced them to the order in which they occur. Naturally the prophet's glory was somewhat reflected on the disciple, and Baruch's name is associated with several works originating in times long posterior

to his own. Short as is the book of *Baruch*, it is composed of two distinct parts.

In 1, 1 to 3, 8 Baruch is supposed to be at Babylon, where he reads to his fellow-captives a composition which makes so profound an impression that they decide to send to their brethren at Jerusalem money with which to purchase beasts to make expiatory sacrifices. He urges his compatriots to pray for Nebuchadnezzar; and this long prayer for the King of Babylon is the real burden of the book, the introduction being but the literary device to ensure interest and authority by the use of a venerated name. The close similarity between this prayer and that of *Daniel* 9, 7—19 suggests the interesting enquiry, Which is the original? While Pusey maintains that the Canonical version is the original, Ewald inclines to the opposite opinion.

The second section (3, 9 to 5, 9) opens with an invitation to all and sundry to

heed the words of wisdom incorporated in the Law. After the method with which more ancient prophetic utterances make us familiar, his readers are bidden to consider the Captivity as the result of transgression, and Restoration as contingent on the renewal of piety. How these two unrelated sections became united it is impossible to tell. The whole book is regarded as an appendix to *Jeremiah*, as the *Prayer of Manasses* is an appendix to *Chronicles*.

*Judith* is the story of a second Jael. It is fiction, exquisitely finished, yet abounding in chronological inconsistencies. We can never over-emphasise the fact that Jewish writers cared only secondarily for exactitude in history; to them the one thing needful was that the recital should illustrate and enforce their religious convictions. What mattered was not the history itself, but the effect it had on their readers. In an illuminating sentence Professor Sayce says, in this connection: "The tyrants

and conquerors of history and tradition passed one into the other like the colours of a kaleidoscope—all alike were but forms and types of the tyrants of the writer's time. It mattered little what special name was given to them, or into what anachronisms and geographical confusion the story fell. In this atmosphere the distinctions of time and place were obliterated: past and present, west and east, were merged in one." The "Haggadist" lived, not in a world of everyday events, but in a world of spiritual and moral truth.

Thus it is with *Judith*, the last direct expression of the fierce spirit of the older Judaism. The Assyrian King, being engaged in war, invited the assistance of all his subjects; some had declined, and after victory to his arms he proceeded to punish the recalcitrants. His general, Holofernes, devastated all their regions, and amongst the rest the newly restored country of the Jews. The fortress of Bethubia, however, held

out against him in hardy resistance, but at last agreed to capitulate if they were not relieved in five days. Judith was a rich widow of the place; she rallied her fellow-townsmen on their lack of confidence in God, and, accompanied by her maid, she entered the Assyrian camp. There she reported that the besieged were so hard pressed by hunger that they were about to consume things consecrated to God, and, seeing the Divine anger would certainly visit such an enormity of transgression, it would not be necessary for the besiegers to strike a blow. She asked permission to remain in the camp and to go forth at dawn to perform her orisons and ablutions. Holofernes believed her, and was fascinated by her charms. On the fourth day he gave a feast in her honour, but during the feast he was overcome with drunkenness, and, when the other guests retired, Judith hacked off his head with his own scimitar. Towards morning

she pulled the mosquito curtain over the corpse, and went forth as usual with her attendant, who carried the general's head in her basket. Escaping to the beleaguered town, she told what had happened, and induced them to make a sortie. The Assyrian army was stricken with panic, and the town was saved.

The motto writ large in this story is "Our fathers trusted in Thee, and Thou didst deliver them." It is a trumpet blast to rouse the Jews to fight to the death against Syria for the sake of their religion. Certainly it does not approve itself to Christian ethics any more than does the perfidious assassination by Jael. But in consideration of the awful fact that the Jews were continually exposed to the ravages of powerful and cruel enemies, and seeing that they had no means of resistance save that inspired by ruse and cunning, the act of Judith is less inexcusable, and we can understand her honourable position among their ancestral heroines. Ruskin in his

"Mornings in Florence" wrote of *Judith:* "The conception of facts and the idea of Jewish womanhood are there, grand and real as a marble statue, a possession for all ages. . . . She is not merely the Jewish Delilah to the Assyrian Samson, but the mightiest, purest, highest type of high passion in severe womanhood offered to our human memory."

*Tobit* is a moral story due exclusively to the author's imagination, an altogether charming Hebrew idyll of angelic ministrations mingling with domestic life. From end to end it breathes the wholesome and touching piety of Hebraism, and attests the national resignation and the national hopes under calamity without any trace of hatred and vengeance. Its note is cosmopolitan and human. It achieved great popularity immediately on production, and has always been a favourite among readers of the Apocryphal Scriptures, so that many who know none other of the books bearing that misleading

title are familiar with its naïve simplicity and warm domestic colouring. The home of the Cohens in *Daniel Deronda* is scarcely more real than the interior of Tobit's household. Briefly put, here is the burden of the story: An honest Israelite, involved in the general ruin of his nation, was deported to Nineveh, where by commerce he made for himself a competency. (The greater part of the Jews were thoroughly naturalised in Babylonia: their names frequently occur in contracts still extant, and cuneiform tablets attest their holding of official posts in Nineveh.*) He entrusted his savings to a Jewish

* The ancient policy of deporting conquered peoples was not determined by motives of cruelty. The involuntary exiles were assured that the removal was for their advantage (*Isai.* 36, 17), and these were no delusive promises (cf. *Jer.* 29, 5—7). When the decree was issued that exiles might return to their native land, only a small fraction of them cared to take advantage of it, and Babylonia long included a large Jewish population.

banker in Media. Then misfortunes rained upon him, as upon Job, storm on storm: the Jews were persecuted afresh, his available possessions were confiscated, he lost his sight by accident. Reduced to misery and want, he resolved to recover the sum placed in the keeping of his distant friend, and to that end he sent his son Tobias thither. But Tobias was so young as to need a travelling companion, and such an one presented himself in Azarias, who was engaged. "So they both went forth to depart, and the young man's dog with them." (That last touch is inimitably realistic.) The two young men journeying came to Ecbatana, where resided a family allied to Tobit, and from them they received hospitality. A marriage was quickly arranged between Tobias and his cousin Sara. Azarias proceeded alone to procure the invested money, and, that accomplished, the newly-wedded couple took the road homewards towards Nineveh, under the conduct of

Azarias, who in the end, when they wished to recompense his services, declared himself an angel sent expressly to unite them in marriage, and disappeared after having indicated a remedy which restored sight to the old man, whose days are prolonged in the bosom of an untroubled domestic happiness.

These touching human elements are united with a supernaturalism as bald as any to be found in the *Arabian Nights*, and there are abundant traces of that magical art which was countenanced and assimilated by the Babylonian religion. There are in the text anachronisms which indicate its non-historicity. But nothing can extenuate the polemical malevolence with which many writers have fastened on this little work, wherein we have so charming a tableau of the interior life of a family devoted to the law of God. Who can fail to be affected by the pathetic recital of the old man's piety towards living and dead?

"I did many almsdeeds to my

brethren: I gave my bread to the hungry and my garments to the naked: and if I saw any of my race dead and cast forth on the wall of Nineveh I buried him: and if Sennacherib the king slew any when he came fleeing from Judea I buried them privily: for in wrath he slew many, and the bodies were sought for by the king and were not found. But one of the Ninevites went and showed to the king concerning me, how I buried them, and I hid myself: and when I knew that I was sought for to be put to death, I withdrew myself for fear, and all my goods were forcibly taken away, and there was nothing left unto me, save my wife Anna and my son Tobias" (1, 16—20).

The insistence on burial is directed against the Persian disposal of the dead, which consisted in leaving them to be devoured by beasts and birds of prey.

"Now, when I was come home again, and my wife Anna was restored unto me, and my son Tobias, in the feast of Pentecost, which is the holy feast of the

seven weeks, there was a good dinner prepared me, and I sat down to eat. And I saw abundance of meat, and I said to my son, 'Go and bring what poor man soever thou shalt find of our brethren, who is mindful of the Lord; and lo, I tarry for thee.' And he came and said, 'Father, one of our race is strangled and is cast out in the market-place.' And before I had tasted aught I sprang up and took him up into a chamber until the sun was set. And I returned and washed myself and ate my bread in heaviness, and remembered the prophecy of Amos, as he said, 'Your feasts shall be turned into mourning and all your mirth into lamentation.' And I wept; and when the sun was set, I went and made a grave, and buried him. And my neighbours mocked me, and said, 'He is no longer afraid to be put to death for this matter, and yet he fled away, and lo! he burieth the dead again.' And the same night I returned from burying him and slept by the wall of my courtyard, being polluted" (2, 1—9).

There are heartfelt prayers recorded in this little book, and the good counsels addressed by the blind old man to his departing son are eloquent in their simplicity. Concrete form is given to the idea that a good man is ordered in all his goings by a guardian-angel, and the wedding which is brought about by the angel is but the poetic expression of the happy proverb that good marriages are made in Heaven. *

The leading ideas of the book are that righteousness finally conquers all difficulties, although it may seem for long to be at the mercy of wickedness, that God hears the prayer of the afflicted, and that the Divine favour is won by the practice of charity, the reverent burial of the dead and other deeds of piety.

* In the 1549 version of the Anglican Prayer Book the Benediction Prayer of the Marriage Service included the phrase, "O God, . . . as Thou didst send Thy angel Raphael to Tobias and Sara the daughter of Raguel, to their great comfort, so vouchsafe to send Thy blessing upon these Thy servants."

# THE WISDOM BOOKS.

# IV.

## THE WISDOM BOOKS.

Hebrew Philosophy—Ecclesiasticus—Wisdom—Conclusion.

During the Greek period of Jewish History was produced the "Wisdom Literature," a group of works of which *Ecclesiasticus* and *Proverbs* found a place in the Hebrew Canon, while *Ecclesiasticus* and *Wisdom* are Apocryphal (that is, Palestinian Jews refused them admission to the Canon, but their acceptance by Greek-speaking Jews led to their introduction to the Christian Church). These four works belong to the same period, as their common features indicate; but three of them, as being of uncertain authorship, were ascribed to King Solomon. His renown for wisdom, both among his own people and among other

peoples of the East, must have rested on fact. There is no more reason to doubt that Solomon was a sage than to doubt that King David was a poet. But of those qualified to judge no one for a moment supposes that these books were written by him.

As a people, the Hebrews were not keenly interested in philosophy for its own sake, or, in other words, they had but small ambition to bring the universe at large into a rational scheme of thought. The problem of Greek philosophy was to reach God through the complete whole of existence. Hebrew Wisdom started from God as the source of all, and occupied itself in tracing His activity in such spheres of its operation as came within their purview. The Hebrews felt deeply the practical problems of human life. The Wisdom that solves the problems of the universe was regarded by them as the property of God Himself alone; Wisdom for man consisted, according to them, in the fear of God and departing

from evil. Speculation was held to be barren. Wisdom was the guide of life—"those who love her love life, and those who seek her early find acceptance" (*Ecclus.* 4, 11—15). This practical Wisdom came forth from God (*Ecclus.* 24, 1—6), and after visiting all the nations of earth, took up her abiding-place in Israel. *Ecclesiasticus* makes her the mother of fair love and godly fear, of knowledge and holy hope: "he that obeys her shall never be put to confusion." It is only in the *Book of Wisdom*, (which, more than any other sacred Jewish book, shows the influence of Greek thought), that an attempt is made to establish that highest Monotheism, which consists in the synthesis of that Divine Wisdom that flows through the universe and of that practical Wisdom of right living of which conscience is the enforcing imperative. Conscience is the essential human attribute, and unless there be schism in the universe this sense of obligation is the pressure of the

Creator toward righteousness. To that idea there is an approximation in this greatest of the Apocryphal books.

The name of *Ecclesiasticus* recalls *Ecclesiastes*, but the two books differ altogether in form, in spirit, and in tendency; and of the two, *Ecclesiasticus* is the nobler book. The title is not authentic. We cannot tell by what title the author wished it to be called; indeed, Hebrew writers were not in the habit of naming their books, and the titles that we employ to distinguish them date only from the time of their collection. In early times this book was, in accordance with the traditional Hebrew practice, called after its first important word—"Wisdom," "The Wisdom of Ben-Sirach," to distinguish it from "The Wisdom of Solomon." It was named "Ecclesiasticus," not in any sense to designate its authorship, but as descriptive of its character as an ecclesiastical writing constantly used in public worship.

*Ecclesiasticus* is the only book, whether

of the Old Testament (outside the prophets) or of the Apocrypha, of whose authorship we can be positively sure. "I, Jesus (which is the Greek form of the Hebrew *Joshua*), the son of Sirach Eleazar of Jerusalem, have written in this book the instruction of wisdom and understanding" (50, 27). He was a learned Jew, who was well versed in his national literature, and had travelled very considerably. From the Preface we learn that his grandson translated his book from Hebrew into Greek, and as the grandson went to Egypt in 132 B.C., where the translation was made, we are fairly safe in assuming that the original work was produced just before the Maccabæan struggle, and is therefore the oldest Apocryphon. It throws welcome light on the period in which it was written, showing what a cultured, liberal Jew thought and felt on great questions of the day, and what was the state of public opinion, morals, and society in that period. It was long regarded as an

incomparable manual of instruction in the art of life; and it forms the most complete Hebrew text-book in morals. Of course, it is not a work of Moral Philosophy in our acceptation of the term; it wears nothing of the aspect of a systematic treatise, but consists of a body of precepts sententiously expressed. Citing no external authority for what he says, the author appeals to the reason and conscience of his readers. It is not, like *Proverbs*, an anthology of independent maxims heterogeneously put together from various sources, but is the work of one man, who gives his personal reflections freshly and pithily, and considers a subject in all its bearings until he has said all that he wishes to say upon it. There is no plan disposing the material in a natural or logical order; the whole is put together in the interests of edification.

He opens in praise of Wisdom originating in God, and then follow various admonitions on conduct (1, 1—16, 23).

General reflections on human origins and destiny lead to observations on the foundations of human happiness (16, 24—23, 27). Then Wisdom speaks, declaring her embodiment in the Law (24, 1—34). Maxims of social prudence in ordinary daily life follow (25, 1—35, 20), and then a passionate prayer for Israel's deliverance (36, 1—17), a last series of reflections (36, 18—42, 25), a *résumé* of the wonders of creation (43, 1—33), and a list of the great men of national antiquity (44, 1—50, 21).

This last "Hymn of the Forefathers" is a splendid tribute of reverence for the dead, and is still read whenever the illustrious of Christendom are committed to the grave. Artist, thinker, and hero all have their place in this roll of fame.

"Let us now praise famous men, and our fathers that begat us. . . . Such as did bear rule in their kingdoms and were men renowned for their power, giving counsel by their understanding; such as have brought tidings by their prophecies, leaders of the people by their counsels,

and by their understanding men of learning for the people. Wise were their words in their instruction; such as sought out musical tunes and set forth verses in writing; rich men furnished with ability, living peaceably in their habitations. All these were honoured in their generation and were a glory in their days."

Then follows a note of pathos singularly moving:—

"And some there be, which have no memorial, who are perished as though they had not been, and are become as though they had not been born, and their children after them. But these were men of mercy, whose righteous deeds have not been forgotten. . . . Their bodies are buried in peace, and their name liveth to all generations."

The counsels of *Ecclesiasticus* are somewhat utilitarian and worldly-wise, far below the level of the Sermon on the Mount; but the same could be said in greater degree of the "Proverbs

of Solomon." Witty, shrewd, quaint, the nearest approach to humour in Hebrew literature, *Ecclesiasticus* waits the discovery of those who love the charm of an intensely human spirit.

Many are the homely details which he includes, not disdaining even the guidance of behaviour in social gatherings:—

"Consider thy neighbour's liking by thine own, and be discreet in every point. Eat, as becometh a man, those things which are set before thee; and eat not greedily lest thou be hated. Be first to leave off for manners' sake and be not insatiable, lest thou offend; and if thou sittest among many, reach not out thy hand before them" (31, 14—18).

"He that toucheth pitch shall be defiled" (13, 1).

"Have no fellowship with one that is richer and mightier than thyself; what fellowship shall the earthen pot have with the kettle? This shall smite and that be broken in pieces" (13, 2).

"Miss not the discourse of the elders" (8, 9).

"A workman that is a drunkard shall not become rich. He that despiseth small things shall fall little by little" (19, 1).

"Let the counsel of thine own heart stand, for there is none more faithful unto thee than it; for a man's soul is sometimes wont to bring him tidings more than seven watchmen that sit on high on a watch-tower" (37, 13—14).

There is no rabbinical casuistry, no metaphysical subtlety. The author puts his whole strength into the discussion of the conduct of human life, and the trend of his remarks is towards vigorous magnanimous action. Sometimes he is surprisingly modern. Here is his pointed warning against the spoiling of children:—

"Cocker thy child and he shall make thee afraid; play with him and he will grieve thee" (30, 9).

A man weighted with an unworthy

wife is as "aged feet climbing up a sandy way." He hates fools, especially the fools that "travail" in gossip: "Hast thou a word? Let it die with thee; be of good courage, it will not burst thee."

Here is the backbone of honesty:—

"Speak not against the truth and be abashed for thine ignorance; be not ashamed to make confession of thy sins, nor swim against the stream of conviction" (4, 25).

Here is his delight in friendship:—

"Nothing is to be taken in exchange for a friend." "Forsake not an old friend, for the new is not comparable to him." "As new wine so is a new friend; if it become old, thou shalt drink it with gladness" (9, 10).

"How finely" (says Addison in the *Spectator*, No. 78) "he describes the art of making friends by an obliging and affable behaviour! With what prudence doth he caution us in the choice of friends! With what strokes of nature, I could

almost say of humour, has he described the behaviour of a treacherous and self-interested friend! . . . I do not remember to have met with a saying that has pleased me more than that of a friend's being the medicine of life, to express the efficacy of friendship in healing the pains and anguish which naturally cleave to an existence in this world; and am wonderfully pleased with the turn in the last sentence, that a virtuous man shall as a blessing meet with a friend who is as virtuous as himself."

His teaching on forgiveness is strangely prophetic of Christian ethics:—

"Forgive thy neighbour the hurt that he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven thee when thou prayest. One man beareth hatred against another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord?" (28, 2—3).

His inclinations are conservative; he clings like a Sadducee to antiquated forms of belief. His politics are aristocratic;

his personality is professional, and for the classes who work with their hands he has more kindness than respect:—

"The wisdom of a learned man cometh by opportunity of leisure. . . . How can he become wise that holdeth the plough, that driveth oxen, and whose talk is of bullocks? . . . So is every artificer . . . so is the smith sitting by the anvil and considering the unwrought iron, . . . so is the potter sitting at his work and turning the wheel about with his feet. . . . All these put their trust in their hands, and each becometh wise in his own work: without these shall not a city be inhabited. But they shall not be sought for in the council of the people, and in the assembly they shall not mount on high; they shall not sit on the seat of the judge, and they shall not understand the covenant of judgment, neither shall they declare instruction and judgment, but they will maintain the fabric of the world, and in the handiwork of their craft is their prayer" (38, 24—34).

But despite his intellectual contempt for all such, he is somewhat of a philanthropist, and denounces the oppressors of the poor as the worst of sinners; and the prophetic voice is heard in quiet tones:—

"Say not, 'I sinned and what happened to me? For the Lord is long-suffering.' Concerning sin, be not without fear, adding sin to sin, and saying, 'His compassion is great,' . . . for wrath also is His, and His indignation will rest upon sinners. Make no tarrying to turn to the Lord, and put not off from day to day" (5, 4—7).

"He that taketh heed to the commandments sacrificeth a peace-offering: he that requiteth a good turn offereth fine flour, and he that giveth alms sacrificeth a thank-offering." "To depart from unrighteousness that is propitiation" (35, 1—3).

"When ye glorify the Lord exalt Him as much as you can, for even yet will He exceed: and when we exalt Him, put forth your full strength, be not weary, for ye will never attain" (43, 30).

He takes a good view of human nature, and believes in the Divine origin of conscience and in free-will (15, 11). Of the uniformity of Nature and the inexorableness of the laws which keep the stars in their courses he forms practically the same conception as that of the intelligent man of to-day. He is without superstition, and deprecates belief in dreams and divinations; while for angels and devils he has no place. His sagacity is rare; "The knowledge of evil is not wisdom, and the pleasantries of fools are not wit" (14, 22). He has little hope of a future life. Sometimes he declares against it; sometimes he doubts the doctrine of extinction. His scheme of life is confined to this present world: "The covenant of the grave is not shown unto thee"—*that* probably represents his conclusions on the subject. To him death is the dread of the happy, the longed-for goal of the miserable, the sentence of the Most High on all living (41).

"Weep for the dead for he hath lost

the light, and weep for the fool for he wanteth understanding. Make little crying for the dead, for he is at rest, but the life of the fool is worse than death. Seven days are the days of mourning for the dead, but for a fool and an ungodly man, all the days of his life" (22, 11—12).

He has a plentiful fund of faith, of courage for life, and with all his acuteness and worldliness he is rarely cynical, never pessimistic. He clings ever to virtue as the true beacon of human life, and his book is a noble attempt to teach true principles of conduct, so as to commend the wisdom of right living. Finally, *Ecclesiasticus* furnishes the substratum of two of the best known hymns of the Church. That of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, beginning "Jesu, the very thought of Thee," is, even in its wording, the Christian application of part of Chapter 24; while the splendid German hymn, "Now thank we all our God," is taken from *Ecclus.* 50, 22—24.

Now we come to consider, last of all, the noblest book of the Apocrypha, the masterpiece of reflective verse known as *Wisdom*. This has nothing in common with *Ecclesiasticus*, except that both works are didactic and both profoundly charged with the best religious spirit of Judaism. We cannot tell by whom *Wisdom* was written, save that the author was a Jew of Alexandria, who had an intimate acquaintance with Greek philosophy and poetry. His period is variously assigned to different decades between 150 B.C. and 50 A.D.* He was a great writer, using almost classical Greek. There is not a Greek book in Scripture that can be compared with *Wisdom* for strength of style, unless the *Epistle to the Hebrews*.

* Dr. Westcott called attention to certain parallelisms with the Epistles of St. Paul: *Wisdom* 15, 7 with *Romans* 9, 21; 12, 20 with *Romans* 9, 22; 5, 17—19, with 1 *Thess.* 5, 8 and *Eph.* 6, 13—17. Dean Plumptre was so struck with the coincidences of *Wisdom* with the *Epistle to the Hebrews* that he suggested identity of authorship, possibly Apollos. Nothing is more

It is studied rhetoric highly wrought, such as they loved in the later era of Greek literature. No one can fail to discern the difference of intonation in his periods as compared with those of the other writers whom we have been considering. Here is a passage which is replete with the rhetoric associated with the Greek sophists:—

"We took our fill of lawlessness, and we journeyed through trackless deserts, but the way of the Lord we knew not. What did our arrogancy profit us, and what good have riches and vaunting brought us? Those things all passed away as a shadow, and as a message that runneth by; as a ship passing through the billowy water, whereof when it is gone by there is no trace to be found,

remarkable than the way in which the writer of the *Epistle to the Hebrews* borrowed from *Wisdom* the phrases, "The brightness of His Father's glory," "The express image of His person," and boldly applied them as verified to the full in the life of our Lord.

neither pathway of its keel in the billows; or as when a bird flieth through the air, no token of her passage is found, but the light wind, lashed with the stroke of her pinions, and rent asunder with the violent rush of the moving wings, is passed through, and afterwards no sign of her coming is found therein. Or as when an arrow is shot at a mark, the air, disparted closeth up again immediately, so that men know not where it passeth through. So we also as soon as we were born ceased to be, and of virtue we had no sign to show, but in our wickedness we were utterly consumed. Because the hope of the ungodly man is as chaff carried by the wind and as foam vanishing before a tempest, and is scattered as smoke is scattered by the wind, and passeth by as the remembrance of a guest that tarrieth but a day" (5, 7—14).

Another equally rhetorical passage is found in the second chapter:—

"They said within themselves, reasoning not aright, Short and sorrowful is our

life. . . . By mere chance were we born and hereafter we shall be as though we had never been. . . . Come, therefore, let us enjoy the good things that now and are, and let us use the creation with all our soul as youth's possession; let us fill ourselves with costly wine and perfumes, and let no flower of the spring pass us by; let us crown ourselves with rosebuds before they be withered; let none of us go without his share in our proud revelry; everywhere let us leave tokens of our mirth, because this is our portion and our lot is this. Let us oppress the righteous poor, let us not spare the widow nor reverence the hairs of the old man grey for length of years, but let our strength be to us a law of righteousness, for that which is weak is found to be of no service."

The writer's purpose is fairly evident throughout the book. The Jews were scattered through foreign lands and peculiarly open to sceptic and pagan influences. They were beginning to feel

the attraction of Greek thought; he writes, therefore, to strengthen his compatriots in an intelligent grasp of religion by declaring the high truths of Divine Wisdom.

His cardinal thesis is that the universe is penetrated throughout by the living presence of Wisdom, the power that shapes and directs all things. This Wisdom is a personality which emanates from God:—

"For there is in her a spirit quick of understanding, holy, unique in kind, manifold, subtle, freely moving, clear in utterance, unpolluted, distinct, unharmed, loving what is good, keen, unhindered, beneficent, loving toward man, steadfast, sure, free from care, all powerful, all surveying, and penetrating through all spirits that are quick of understanding, pure, most subtle. For Wisdom is more mobile than any motion, yea, she pervadeth and penetrateth all things by reason of her pureness. For she is a breath of the power of God and a clear effluence of the glory of the Almighty,

therefore can nothing defiled find entrance into her. For she is an effulgence from everlasting light and an unspotted mirror of the working of God and an image of His goodness. And she, being one, hath power to do all things, and remaining in herself reneweth all things, and from generation to generation passing into holy souls she maketh men friends of God and prophets. For nothing doth God love save him that dwelleth with Wisdom. For she is fairer than the sun and above all the constellations of the stars: being compared with light, she is found to be before it; for to the light of day succeedeth night, but against Wisdom evil doth not prevail; but she reacheth from one end of the world to the other with full strength, and ordereth all things graciously" (7, 22; 8, 1).

That magnificent description of Wisdom ranks among the noblest passages of human eloquence, and may fairly be placed alongside the Hymn of Cleanthes and the Visions of Plato.

It will be seen that what modern writers call Laws of Nature, our author called Wisdom: moreover, it is substantially identical with the "Logos" of the philosopher Philo. Among men Wisdom manifests herself in two ways:—First, as virtue (7, 27); secondly, as knowledge or science (7, 17—22) (in which latter passage we have for the first time in any Jewish writing a conspectus of the sciences).

*This* is altogether a new note. In *Proverbs*, *Ecclesiastes* and *Ecclesiasticus* there was no attempt at establishing any relationship between the Wisdom that reigns through creation and the practical Wisdom of human conduct. Here they are substantially identified: Nature and History together constitute an ordered scheme of Providence, and the world without and the world within are harmonised by omnipresent Divine Wisdom.

No one contends that the book is by Solomon, who certainly would not have

quoted Isaiah and Jeremiah. Under the mask of Solomon (to whose venerable authority he commits his book), the author gives veiled answer to the pessimism and scepticism of *Ecclesiastes* (also ascribed to Solomon); and the more closely these two books are studied, the more clearly is it recognised that there is essential antagonism between the two works. It must be remembered that the Canonical book had not in our author's time the authority of remote antiquity or of unquestioned acceptance. To many it was tainted with an epicureanism calculated to destroy all nobility of character. This book sanctioning sensuality and denying immortality could not be the true ideal of Wisdom, and the author of *Wisdom* brought forward another Solomon than that presented in *Ecclesiastes*. He pourtrayed an ideal sage, "a kind of Numa Pompilius," devoted to the pursuit of Wisdom. Where the older writer counselled submission to tyrants, the younger called on rulers to remember

their duties (1, 1; 6, 1—10). To the sensual delights of *Ecclesiastes* he opposed "the desire of discipline" and self-mastery (1, 4; 7, 17). To the bitter things written of men, and still more of women, he rejoined that the spirit of Wisdom is ever loving and philanthropic (1, 6). Ever recurring complaints of the vanity of life he rebuked as unprofitable (1, 11). When *Ecclesiastes* held that death was better than life, he rejoined that it was only the ungodly who counted death as friend (1, 16). He puts almost the very words of *Ecclesiastes* into the lips of the ungodly (2, 6, 7). Had the sceptical writer derided the enthusiasm of virtue and the hope of immortality, the more strenuous writer counts such utterances as natural in the mouths of scoffers (4, 4). Our author repairs the defects and deficiencies of his predecessor by representing Solomon as praying (9), by surveying their national history as a long story of Divine education of Israel (10, 11), by rebuking idolatry (13, 1—4),

and by bringing before his readers' minds that thought of the Divine Fatherhood which was beginning to dawn on men (2, 13—16).

*Wisdom* consists of a series of five discourses, each introduced by a gnomic text, each discourse distinct in itself, yet all of them dove-tailed together.

1, 1—11: Singleness of heart, by which alone God is found. The writer denounces all experimenting with evil as the height of folly and wickedness.

1, 12; 6, 11: Immortality (which had been denied by *Ecclesiastes*) as a part of the Divine plan. Death is the result of wickedness. "God made not death."

6, 12; 9, 18: Solomon is summoned (as Shelley summons the Wandering Jew in *Prometheus*) to testify to the facts of the past and the mysteries of the invisible world. Wisdom works salvation.

10, 1; 11, 4 describes the salutary and beneficent activities of Wisdom in the ancient experiences of Israel.

11, 5; 19, 22: A striking spiritualisation of Israel in Egypt, setting forth the Divine judgments on the wicked and the Divine blessings on the good. Gentile deities are declared to be non-entities: all idolatry is folly. With withering sarcasm he shows the perversity of Egyptian animal worship, denounces polytheism in all its forms, presents Greek ideas under the forms of Hebrew story. Apostacy and idolatry are the enemies.

It should be added that the text abounds in digressions, which are as parenthetical as our modern foot-notes.

* * *

The impression produced on my mind by a study of the book is that the writer was intellectually and spiritually revolutionised by attaining a strong belief in the truth of immortality.

It is impossible not to feel that we are entirely outside the circle of ideas in which Palestinian Judaism moved. There are many passages in which the

author cuts right athwart the prejudices of his nation and even the teaching of his national Scriptures. He is loyal to the fundamental principles of Judaism, but he moves quite freely in a region unknown to the greatest of Israel's prophets. He speaks of the Immortality of the Soul without for a moment connoting thereby the resurrection of the body: preceding writers had known nothing of either, and subsequent writers knew no immortality without bodily resurrection. In this respect *Wisdom* is the most modern of Scriptural books. "Justice is immortal" (1, 15).

"The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God: in the eyes of the unwise they seem to perish, but they are in happiness. . . . Their hope is full of immortality" (3, 1—4).

"God created man for immortality, and made him an image of His own eternity" (2, 23).

It is in immortality that consists the image of God, in which man was created;

while physical death entered the world through jealousy of the devil (2, 24). (This is the most ancient scripture which substitutes the devil for the primitive serpent of Eden.) Our author founds his doctrine of immortality on the two strongest bases: the imperfection of this present life as a field for righteousness and the everlasting goodness of God. "The seed of Greek philosophy fell on the soil of Hebrew faith, and struck root downward to a depth from which it has never since been eradicated, and bore fruit upward which has sustained the moral life of Christendom to this hour" (Stanley: *Jewish Church* III. 244). Nowhere else in the Bible is the natural immortality of the soul so strongly and so clearly taught.

Although our author never betrays any suspicion that the Greeks have played an important part in the Divine education of the race, he draws inspiration from the wells of their philosophy. Before his time the Stoics had taught

the doctrine of Providence, which we have implied in

"Thy Providence, O Father, guideth the vessel along, because even in the sea thou gavest a way and in the waves a sure path" (14, 3).

"For when lawless men had supposed that they held a holy nation in their power, they themselves, prisoners of darkness and bound in the fetters of a long night, lay exiled from the eternal Providence" (17, 2).

To the Stoics also belongs the teaching of the inherent dignity of human nature, a dignity which sin can disparage but cannot eliminate: "Nevertheless even these Thou didst spare as being men" (12, 8).

The reference to conscience as making men cowards, and the definition of fear as a surrender of the aids which reason gives, are both Greek (17, 11—12). Before our author Plato had spoken of formless primeval matter (11, 17), had taught the pre-existence of the soul (8, 19),

had described the body as a prison of the soul (9, 15); and his are the four cardinal virtues, "temperance and prudence, righteousness and fortitude" (8, 7), though, unlike the Greeks, our author makes no enquiry into the basis of conduct, and his book is quite barren of any moral philosophy proper. Thus the fundamental truths of Hebraism are happily blended with some of the most beautiful Greek conceptions. The book is "a synthesis of Jewish, Platonic and Stoic elements."

There are preludings, too, of the high faith and teaching of the New Testament:—

"The just man boasteth that God is his Father, and that he is God's son" (2, 17—18).

"To know Thee, O God, is perfect righteousness, yea, to know Thy power is the root of immortality" (15, 3).

"Thou sparest all, for they are Thine, O Sovereign Lord, Thou Lover of souls" (11, 26).

"Thy Providence, O Father, governeth the world" (12, 1).

"He shall put on righteousness as a breastplate, and shall array himself with judgment unfeigned as with a helmet: he shall take holiness as an invincible shield, and he shall sharpen stern wrath for a sword" (5, 18-19).

"For a potter, kneading soft earth, laboriously mouldeth each several vessel for our service; nay, out of the same clay doth he fashion both the vessels that minister to clean uses, and those of a contrary sort, all in like manner; but what shall be the use of each vessel of either sort, the craftsman himself is the judge" (15, 7).

There are especially many premonitions of the Fourth Gospel in the doctrine of Divine Wisdom, wherein lies implicit the Johannine doctrine of the Word, "without whom is not anything made that is made."

Thus we have in *Wisdom* one of the most noteworty literary products of the

Jewish race. By itself this book, so nutritive and illuminative (especially in the Revised Version) should suffice to remove the contemptuous neglect which has so widely fallen to the portion of these ancient Scriptures.

Extravagant claims made on their behalf led to a reaction of disparagement. Nor is there any sign of tendency to revert to the age-honoured practice of deriving lessons for public worship from these books. The Episcopal Church in the United States has entirely discontinued the use of such lessons, save on a few holy days. The Episcopal Church in Ireland was no sooner free to choose its own course than it abolished the Apocryphal lessons altogether. It is very seldom that such lessons are used in any of the Free Churches of Great Britain or America.

The Apocryphal books as a whole are dwarfed by reason of their juxtaposition to the Canonical Scriptures, very much in the same way as the Elizabethan dramatists generally are dwarfed by reason of

their nearness to Shakespeare. More than one writer has said of them something equivalent to this: "No man having drunk the wine of the Canonical books straightway desireth new, for he saith the old is better." And the greater point is given to this comment, since the substance of the books that we have been describing is largely an echo of the older Scriptures.

But admitting the most disparaging estimate of their worth, still there are excellences in these Apocryphal writings, which may take rank with some of those of the Canonical books, proverbs worthy of Solomon, speculations as keen as those of Job, prayers equal to those of the psalmists, prophetic aspirations which might have emanated from Isaiah. Surely this is no small praise!

Our Lord and His apostles may be said, with some assurance, to have known and used these books, so that acquaintance with this literature should be a thing valued by His disciples through all time. It is quite true that

the New Testament contains no direct allusion, and no exact quotation from these sources, but there are abundant coincidences of language and of thought which show that these books were known to the writers.

These books have for many centuries instructed the greater part of Christendom, and have been honoured for their worth. It is surely desirable to maintain continuity with the practices of the ancient and Catholic Church, so far as that is possible, by an intelligent appreciation of literature which they have regarded with such reverence.

Finally, the Apocrypha constitutes an integral part of the Jewish national literature, and comprises all the records that remain to us of their philosophy, poetry and history during several centuries that would otherwise be dumb. It fills a chasm in our understanding of the development of their thought and institutions. The intervening leaf between the two Testaments is no longer blank.

## EXAMPLES OF PARALLELISMS BETWEEN THE NEW TESTAMENT AND THE APOCRYPHA.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Hebrews | 1, 3 | = Wisdom, 7, 26. |
| ,, | 4, 12, 13 | ,, 7, 22—24. |
| ,, | 8, 2, 9, 11 | ,, 9, 8. |
| ,, | 12, 6—11 | ,, 3, 5. |
| ,, | 12, 17 | ,, 12, 10. |
| ,, | 13, 7 | ,, 2, 17. |
| James | 1, 5 | Ecclus., 20, 15; 41, 22. |
| ,, | 1, 8 | ,, 1, 28, 2, 12. |
| ,, | 1, 11 | Wisdom, 2, 8. |
| ,, | 1, 12 | ,, 5, 7; Ecclus., 1, 11, 16, 18; 15, 11. |
| ,, | 1, 17 | Wisdom, 7, 17—20. |
| ,, | 1, 19 | Ecclus., 5, 11; 20, 7. |
| ,, | 1, 20 | Wisdom, 12, 10. |
| ,, | 1, 23 | ,, 7, 26; Ecclus., 12, 11. |
| ,, | 1, 25 | ,, 14, 23; 21, 23. |
| ,, | 2, 13—16 | Wisdom, 6, 6, 24. |
| ,, | 2, 21 | ,, 10, 5. |
| ,, | 3, 2—8 | Ecclus., 28. |
| ,, | 4, 14 | Wisdom, 3, 16; 5, 9—14. |
| ,, | 5, 6 | ,, 2, 12. |
| ,, | 5, 7 | Ecclus., 6, 19. |
| Romans | 2, 4 | Wisdom, 15, 1. |
| ,, | 2, 5—11 | Ecclus., 32, 15. |

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| Romans 9, 21 | = | Wisdom, 15, 7. |
| ,, 9, 22 | | ,, 12, 20. |
| ,, 11, 32 | | ,, 11, 24. |
| 1 Cor. 6, 2 | | ,, 3, 8. |
| ,, 6, 12—13 | | Ecclus., 37, 28; 36, 20. |
| 2 Cor. 5, 4 | | Wisdom, 9, 15. |
| ,, 7, 10 | | Ecclus., 30, 21—23; 38, 18. |
| Eph. 6, 11—17 | | Wisdom, 5, 18—20. |
| 1 Thess. 4, 13 | | ,, 3, 18. |
| John 1, 1—14 | | ,, 8, 3; 9, 1; and Chaps. 7—9, *passim*. |
| ,, 3, 12 | | ,, 9, 16. |
| ,, 3, 14 | | ,, 16, 5. |
| ,, 17, 3 | | ,, 15, 1. |

## SUGGESTED PASSAGES FROM THE APOCRYPHA SUITABLE FOR LESSONS.

Ecclus., 1, 1—14; 2; 17, 1—14; 18, 1—15; 28, 1—10; 38, 1—15; 42, 15—25; 43, 1—14; 44, 1—16.

Wisdom, 1; 2, 1—14; 3, 1—12; 4, 1—3, 6—18; 5, 1—17; 7, 22; 8, 1.

2 Esdras, 2, 33—48.

Baruch, 4, 21—31.

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